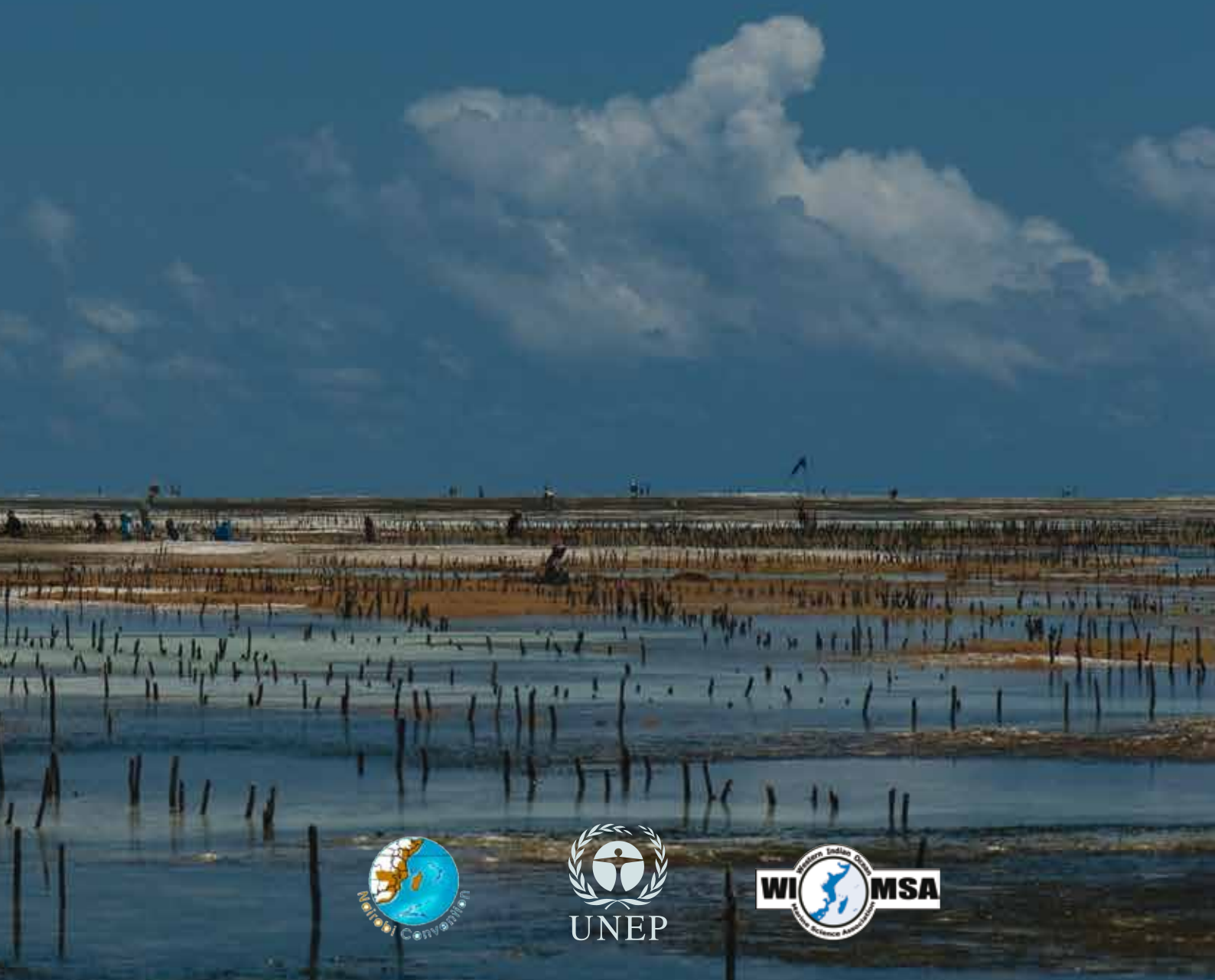


Regional State of the Coast Report **Western Indian Ocean**



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FOREWORD

The complex archipelagic system of 115 islands, of which 41 are granitic and 74 are coralline in nature, within an exclusive economic zone of about 1.44 million km², of the Seychelles, is representative of a truly unique Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region. A region that is world-renown for the vast array of habitats with remarkable natural beauty, spectacular biodiversity and rich natural resources. In the WIO region, we are proud of our leadership and history in the management of the marine environment. Our marine protected areas are among the oldest eg Malindi Marine Park in Kenya, established in 1968, and the Aldabra Atoll in the Seychelles, that was established in 1981 and declared as a World Heritage site in 1982. The Primeiras and Segundas Archipelago in Mozambique is among largest protected area in Africa, covering more than 4020 square miles. The region continues to explore new and innovative options for managing oceans and coasts. We also recognise the transboundary nature of shared ocean resources, and our governments have signed the Nairobi Convention and its protocols as the framework for collaboration in the management of our oceans to sustain cultural and economic opportunities that the marine resources presents to the region as a whole.

The coastal area in the WIO region is home for over 60 million people, with long and rich cultural traditions on the management of the coastal and marine resources. The Seychelles is a microcosm of our Western Indian Oceans cultural diversity. People with African, Asian and European origin, have brought with them their traditions and cus-

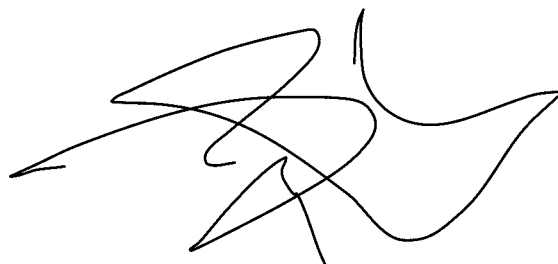
toms, contributing to the existing vibrant Seychellois maritime culture.

Seychelles has been in the forefront at regional and global level in promoting a Blue Economy pathway for sustainable growth. We strongly believe that we can reconcile fast economic growth with climate resilience development by harnessing the full array of ocean wealth to accelerate our countries' abilities to produce more goods including food and energy.

Our success in developing a Blue Economy is equally dependent on effective management of the coastal and marine environment. The production of this first Regional State of the Coast Report for the Western Indian Ocean Region, which describes the status of the environment and our ocean's vast array of untapped or under developed resources, is the first step in our efforts to establish a common understanding that will be used as the baseline for future reports, scenario building and forecasting.

This report is also a reflection of our collaborative efforts under the Nairobi Convention to create a link between science and policy making at the regional scale. May I commend all those who have made the production of this report possible for their worthy contribution to the body of knowledge on the coastal and marine environment of the WIO region.

It is my hope that this report will inspire our countries in our pursuit to take more concrete actions towards turning our dreams of developing Blue Economy for our countries into reality.



Didier Dogley
Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change
Seychelles

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